

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

61ED

OCI No. 1526
Copy No. 10

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
4 February 1954

ARMY ATTACHE' SCORES FRENCH CONDUCT OF INDOCHINA WAR

The American army attaché in Saigon, pointing to total French failure to seize the initiative from the Viet Minh, believes that General Navarre is under Paris instructions to conduct a minimum-casualty holding action and to improve his position where feasible with a view to eventual negotiation. The Viet Minh, on the other hand, is fighting a clever war of attrition, apparently feeling that French and American public opinion will eventually force a favorable settlement.

Characterizing French staff thinking and procedure as of 1935-39 vintage, the attaché points to the defensive mentality exemplified by Dien Bien Phu and other fortified outposts, where forces needed for offensive action elsewhere do not even attempt contact with the enemy. Navarre, after an auspicious start, is now using the same tactics and strategy as his defensive-minded predecessor. The few actions initiated by the French are unimaginative and only undertaken when astronomical odds favor them. Their failure to carry the fight to the enemy in central Laos, where French troops have more than a three-to-one advantage, is incomprehensible.

The attaché states further that continual French demands for more American logistical support, when they are unable to utilize what is already on hand, can only result in the wasting of millions of dollars. In planning their request for more materiel, they completely overlook requirements for operation, maintenance and storage.

In conclusion he reports American military opinion in Indochina that the greatest deterrents to successful French military action are a lack of energetic support from Paris, inadequate training of staff and personnel, and a defensive psychology.

DIA review(s) completed.

Document No.	2
No Change In Class.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Declassified	
Class. Changed To:	TS S C
Auth:	HR 73-2
Date:	7 July 78
By:	

25X1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~